

ISSN 0040-6406 Number 269 Winter 2010

Thoreau's Cartographic Explorations: Two New Manuscript Maps from the Library of Congress Collections

John Hessler

It is well known that Henry David Thoreau made his living in part as a land surveyor in Concord, Massachusetts. Less familiar is the fact that he also spent a great deal of time reading, annotating, and drawing maps. In his so-called “Canadian Notebook” (held by the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York), Thoreau recorded detailed bibliographic and geographic notes on some of the earliest and most important works by the first European explorers and cartographers of the American continent.¹ In this notebook, he paid particular attention to the cartographic works of Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598), Cornelius Wytfliet (d.1597), John Smith (1580-1631), Sebastian Cabot (c. 1476-1557), and Samuel Champlain (1567-1635).

On a fly-leaf of the Canadian Notebook, written in the reverse direction from the back, appears a list of maps in Thoreau's hand, which reads:

I have copied maps made ac. to...

1. Verzarzanus' plot in Hacklyts divers voyage 1582
2. Map made in forme sent to Seville in 1527 by Thorne
3. Map of Nova Francia etc. in Ramurio 3rd volume (1556) ac to discoveries of a great sea captiane
4. Of America in Ortelius (1570 &c) who used Cabot and others
5. Of Norumbega and Virginia 1597 Wytfliet
- 6 Nouvelle France Champlain 1612, 1632

Of the maps listed by Thoreau on this fly-leaf, the first three are contained in the miscellaneous notes that are also part of the Canadian Notebook. Thoreau sketched each of these three maps on small pieces of paper and folded them together with fragmentary notes and annotations. The fourth and fifth maps, by the cartographers Ortelius and Wytfliet, are among the maps

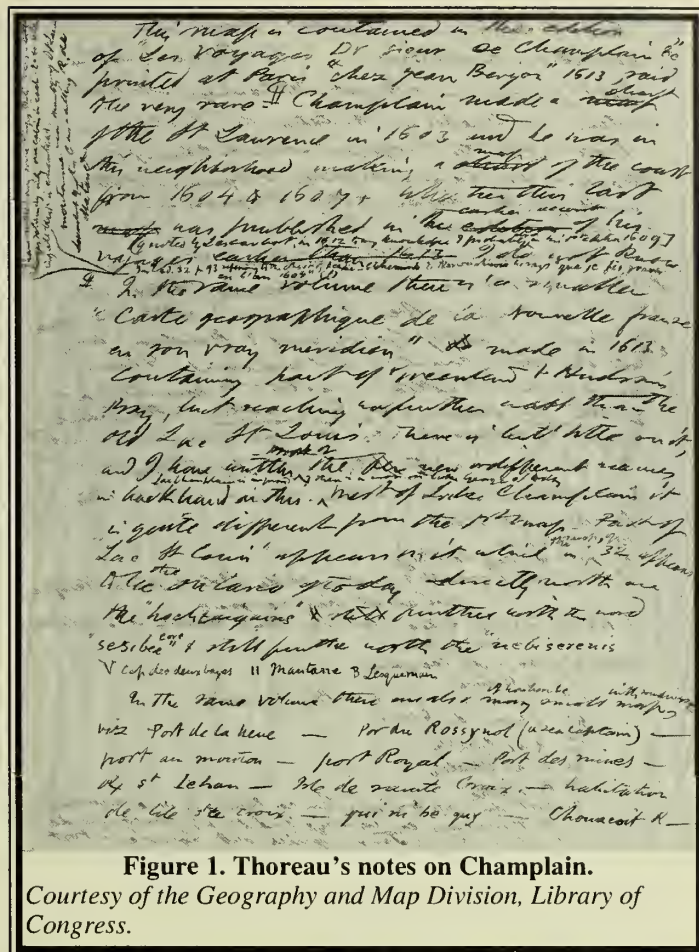


Figure 1. Thoreau's notes on Champlain.

Courtesy of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

Contents

Thoreau's Cartographic Explorations	1
Czech Thoreau	2
Thoreau's Advocacy of Violent Resistance . .	5
The 19th Century Concord Digital Archive . . .	7
<i>Passion for Nature: A Review</i>	9
Additions to the Thoreau Bibliography . . .	11
Notes & Queries	13
President's Column	14
Notes from Concord	15

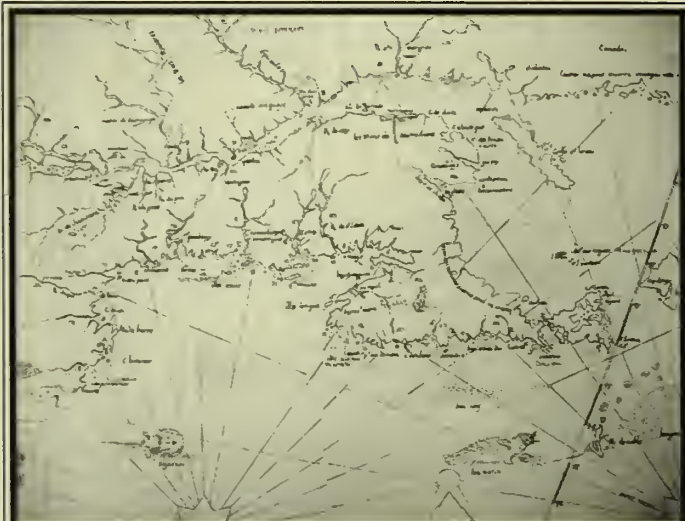


Figure 2. A portion of Thoreau's copy of the 1612 Champlain map.

Courtesy of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

and drawings that make up the collection of his land surveys found in the Concord Free Public Library. But what about the two Champlain maps from 1612 and 1632? These two maps appear in no inventory of Thoreau's works and until recently were unknown.

Thoreau spent a great deal of time reading Champlain's works and borrowed many editions of his *Voyages* from the Harvard Library, starting in late 1850. Recently, in the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress, two Champlain manuscript maps, obtained by the library in the early 1970s, came to my attention, along with four pages of unidentified notes. The notes, a page of which is shown in Figure 1, are in Thoreau's hand and resemble in form and content his writings on maps found in the fragments of the Canadian Notebook. They describe the contents of the two maps, originally from Champlain's *Voyages*, and contain Thoreau's annotations and commentary on them. The first map, the *Carte géographique de la Nouvelle France*, dates from 1612 and is shown in Figure 2. This map, which is larger than any of the map sketches in the Canadian Notebook or at the Concord Library, is drawn in pencil on surveyor's cloth and overwritten with black and red ink. The process of inking over the pencil sketch is incomplete. The second map, from 1632 (Figure 3), is on heavy paper and has extensive lists of place names on the verso.

In writing about cartographic works, Thoreau was concerned with the changes that occurred in place names and with the accuracy of maps over time. He wrote of the 1632 map, "I have traced about a little more than a quarter of this . . . and have written on the [older] French map most of the new versions which are current in red ink." First-hand examination of a section of the 1612 copy (Figure 4) reveals Thoreau's annotation of the earlier map (in red ink) based on new information contained in Champlain's later 1632 version.

Thoreau's written commentary on these two maps is lengthy and substantive. I am currently working on a book exploring these details and other new research on Thoreau's cartography.

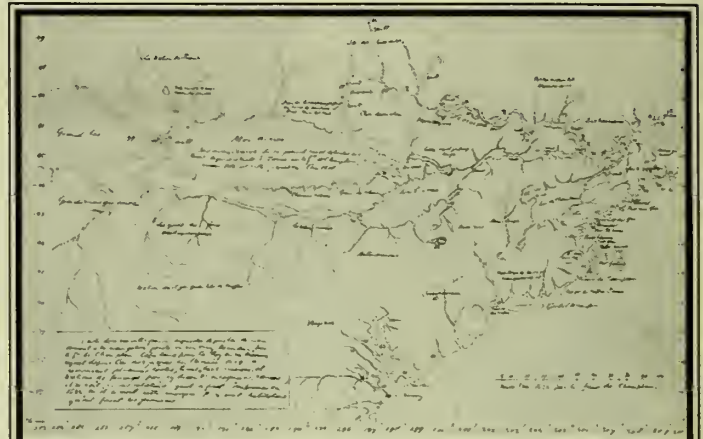


Figure 3. Thoreau's copy of the 1632 Champlain map.
Courtesy of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

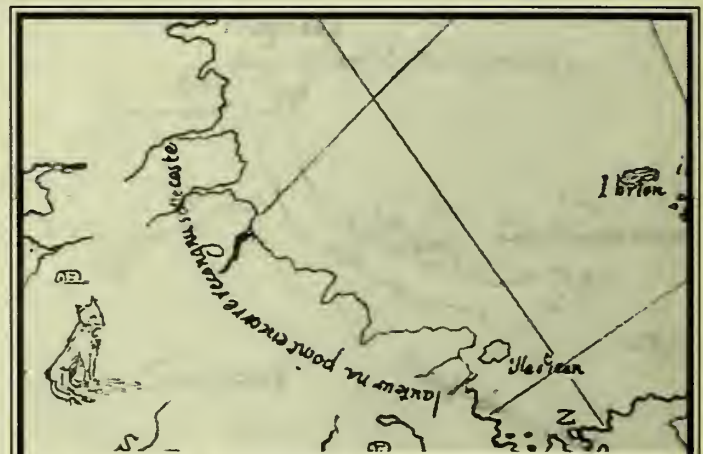


Figure 4. Detail of Thoreau's updated annotations on his copy of the 1612 map.

Courtesy of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

Notes

¹ Canadian Notebook (MA 595), Henry David Thoreau, Notebooks, Pierpont Morgan Library, Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts.

CZECH THOREAU

Jan Hokeš

Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, "[W]e must laboriously seek the meaning of each word and line, conjecturing a larger sense than common use permits."¹ This thought holds true for most of Thoreau's works. In attempting to conjecture any sense of some of his phrases or sentences, even native English speakers are sometimes lost. It is no wonder, then, that translating Thoreau into a foreign language represents a challenge for many a sore-eyed translator who has "planted letter"² the whole day and "slumbered a fool's allowance"³ at night. Nevertheless, there have been a few translators who have tried, more or less

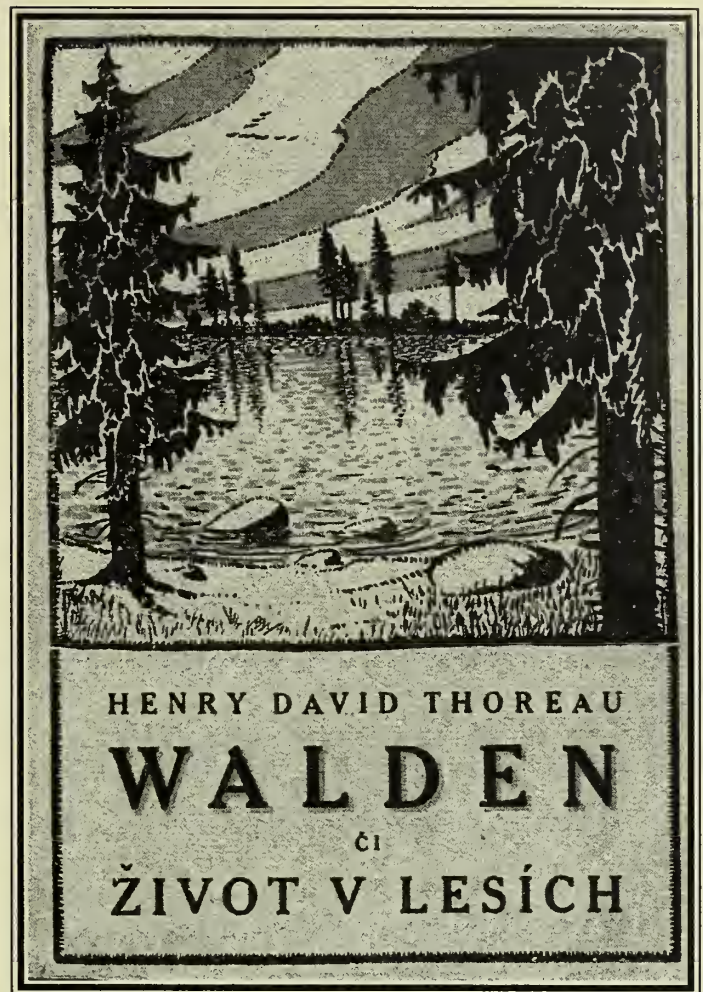
successfully, to render the Concord saunterer's words into Czech.

Even though the readers of *Walden* or "Walking" in the Czech Republic are greatly outnumbered by those who watch American soap operas, Thoreau's words and thoughts appeal to a few thousand people (to judge by book sale figures) here in the heart of Europe. They also disturb some, who—influenced by a book written by the country's current president and funded by the oil industry—believe that global climate changes do not exist and that environmentalism poses a threat to mankind.

However unlikely it may seem, Thoreau's works have been read by the Czechs for more than a century. In fact, the history of Czech translations of Thoreau is longer than that of the Czech Republic or of the former Czechoslovakia. The first was completed by Zdeněk Franta (1868-1943) and published by Jan Laichter in Prague in 1902, when the Czechs were still citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Franta's translation of *Walden* was one of the earliest translations of any text by Thoreau into any language, preceded probably only by the German version of *Walden* in 1897.⁴ Zdeněk Franta was a high school teacher. He also translated many other books from English, including *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, *Little Dorrit* by Charles Dickens, and *Short History of the World* by H. G. Wells. Considering that his Czech version of *Walden* was the first, its quality is remarkably high. Despite a few inaccuracies, Franta successfully retained much of the original meaning. His greatest weakness is that of all Czech translations of Thoreau's nature writing: the names of plants and animals are often wrong. There are basically two problems with them. First, the English word sometimes means a different plant or animal species in Europe than in America. Second, some such names are puzzling. For example, "red alder-berry" does not refer to alder, but to the berry of a species of holly. The early translators of Thoreau did not have access to the resources now available—Ray Angelo's outstanding *Botanical Index*, for example, or Jeffrey Cramer's annotated edition of *Walden*. Undoubtedly, some of the mistakes in plant and animal names also reflect simple ignorance.

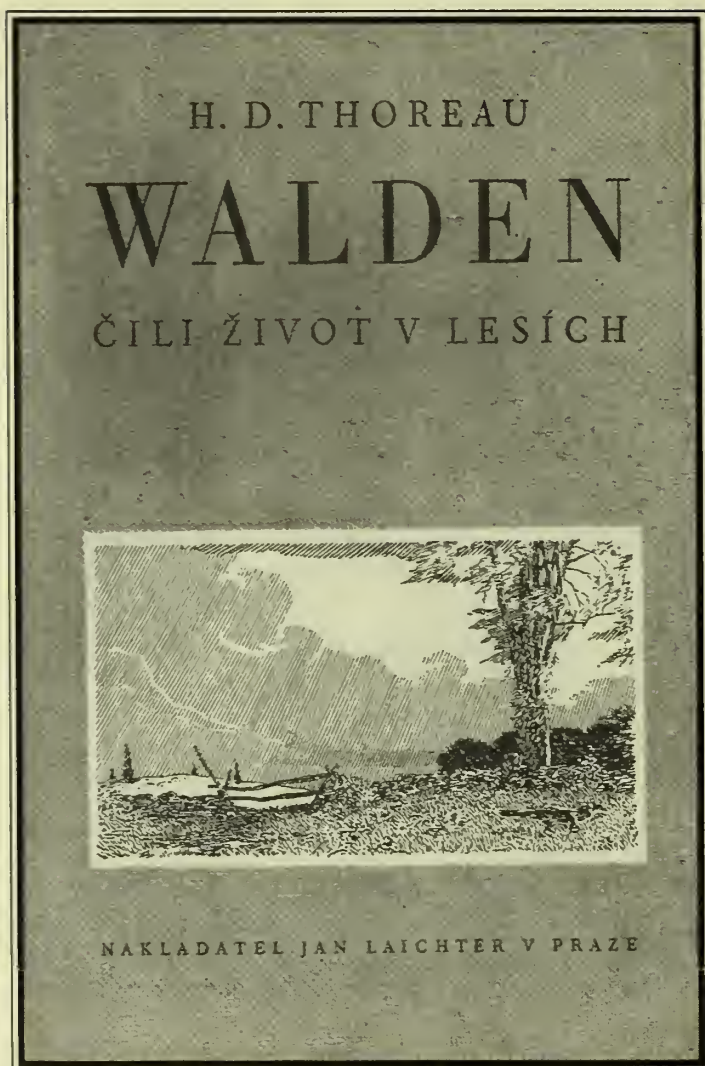
Franta wrote a nice introduction to his translation. It shows knowledge of and enthusiasm for Thoreau ("I cannot read, in its context, the passage where he speaks about the hound, the bay horse, and the turtle dove without shivers running down my spine," he exclaims). In addition to other sources, he cites H. S. Salt's *Life of Henry David Thoreau* and F. B. Sanborn's *Henry D. Thoreau*. (The influence of the latter is shown in Franta's use of the same portrait of Thoreau as that which appears as the frontispiece in Sanborn's book—an engraving from the Dunshee ambrotype.) But there are a few errors. On the first page of the introduction, for instance, Franta states that Thoreau quit his first job as a teacher after two years (instead of two weeks). But, as Thoreau wrote in "Natural History of Massachusetts," "we will not complain of the pioneer, if he raises no flowers with his first crop."⁵ And Zdeněk Franta was truly a pioneer in this field.

In 1913, Miloš Seifert (1887-1941)—another high school teacher—founded the first Czech "Woodcraft tribe," inspired by Ernest Thompson Seton (1860-1946) and his Woodcraft Indians. Nine years later, he co-founded and became the leader of the Woodcraft League of Czechoslovakia. In 1920, Seifert wrote a handbook of the Woodcraft Movement. One of its chapters was titled "H. D. Thoreau—The Pioneer of Our Ideal." It is obvious that the early Czechoslovakian Woodcrafters regarded both Thoreau and Seton as major inspirations. They even named one of their campsites in Slovakia "Walden." (There is now another campsite in Moravia called "Little Walden," and a tribe of the



Czech Woodcraft League bears the name of Thoreau's most famous book, too.) Significantly, in 1923 a successful series of books called "The Walden Library" was begun. Its publisher was Woodcrafter Bohumil Z. Nekovarik. The series focused mainly on the works of Seton, but in 1924 a new translation of *Walden* by Miloš Seifert became its sixth volume. Seifert says in the preface: "I have done a new translation of Thoreau's *Walden* because the first one was sold out long ago and there is no hope that it will be published again . . . This book is so important that it will never be too late for it to appear. The future is still to show its value." Apart from Seifert's own introduction, this edition of *Walden* is prefaced by Emerson's "Thoreau." The translation is good even though not always to the standard set by Franta in 1902. The first page contains a mistake (which remains uncorrected in the 1933 reprint), rendering one of the sentences nonsensical. Instead of Thoreau's "those of my readers who feel no particular interest in me," it comes out as "those of my readers who feel particular interest in me." Like Zdeněk Franta, Miloš Seifert was occasionally inaccurate, but always tried to convey Thoreau's meaning. Unfortunately, he did no better at translating the names of plants and animals, even repeating Franta's mistaken translation of "pine" as "spruce" in the first line of "Baker Farm." Despite its several shortcomings, Seifert's pioneering work deserves appreciation.

It is not clear why Seifert felt that there was "no hope" for the reprinting of Franta's translation of *Walden*. In 1925, Jan



Laichter published a collection of Thoreau's essays called *Rambles Through Nature and Views of Society* (in Czech: *Toulky přírodou a pohledy do společnosti*). The first part included "Walking," "Autumnal Tints," "A Winter Walk," "Night and Moonlight," "May Days," and "Days and Nights in Concord." *Views of Society* consisted of "Love," "Chastity and Sensuality," "Civil Disobedience," "Life Without Principle," "A Plea for Captain John Brown," "The Last Days of John Brown," and "After the Death of John Brown." Most of the essays were translated by Zdeněk Franta except for "May Days," "Days and Nights in Concord," and the three texts about Brown, which were translated by Čeněk Kočí (who was born in 1878). Interestingly, Kočí, too, was a high school teacher. He also translated Emerson. Very little biographical information on him is available. Both he and Franta were competent translators and, with a few exceptions, coped with Thoreau's difficult English texts. In some instances, however, Franta's work does not live up to the quality of his translation of *Walden*. In "Walking," for example, there are some mistakes that could have been easily avoided, and part of a complicated sentence is left out. Nevertheless, for several decades these remained the only Czech translations of Thoreau's essays.

The year 1949 brought Jan Laichter's republication of Franta's slightly revised translation of *Walden*, illustrated with beautiful drawings by a Czech-born American, Rudolph Ruzicka (1883–1978). Ruzicka's illustrations were first used in the 1930 Lakeside

Press edition of *Walden*. Ruzicka was familiar with the landscape of Thoreau's hometown. His publisher (R. R. Donnelley/Lakeside Press) arranged for him to live in Concord in 1929, while he completed the illustrations for *Walden*. In 1948, the Communist Party had already seized power in Czechoslovakia and all private business was then gradually put under state ownership. Shortly after bringing out *Walden* early in 1949, Laichter's publishing house ceased to exist. (Laichter himself had died three years before.)

Communism in Czechoslovakia meant the end of publishing Thoreau's work in Czech for more than four decades. The only exception, the "Scarlet Oak" section from "Autumnal Tints," was included in an anthology of nature writing called *Eternal Nature* (in Czech *Věčná příroda*) in 1984. It was translated by Vladimír Smetáček.⁶ In spite of a few mistakes, the translation is solid and its language is, of course, more modern than that used by Zdeněk Franta in 1925.

Shortly before the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, the Odeon publishing house asked Josef Schwarz (1915–2003)—translator of more than sixty books by British and American writers—to do a new, modern, and somewhat freer translation of *Walden*. That is exactly what he did. Schwarz adopted a looser, perhaps more poetic, approach than his predecessors. Published in 1991, the translation reads well, but in some cases Schwarz goes too far and unnecessarily alters Thoreau's meaning or interpolates phrases or parts of sentences that the original does not include. For example, he changes "Jonas or Solomon" in the first chapter to "Peter or Paul." In Thoreau's sentence about spitting a Mexican in "The Bean-Field," he adds (as if he wanted to sound politically correct), "even though I had nothing against the Mexicans." He avoids Franta's and Seifert's transformation of "pine" to "spruce," but gets most of the names of plants and animals wrong. None of the translators of *Walden* acknowledged that the word "pond" usually translates into Czech as "rybník," which is an artificially created body of water used for breeding fish, while Walden Pond is a natural area of water. Thus, it should really be translated as "jezero" ("lake").

In 1994, the Slovak publisher Christiania issued *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays* as translated into Czech by Vladimír Paulíny.⁷ The collection included "Civil Disobedience," "A Plea for Captain John Brown," "Life Without Principle," and Emerson's "Thoreau." Unfortunately, this is a very poor Czech translation of Thoreau. It is highly imprecise, whole sentences are left out, and the texts are abridged.

A year later, the small Czech publisher Zvláštní vydání started a series of pocket-size books by different authors. Zdeněk Franta's 1925 translations of "Walking" and "Civil Disobedience" were two of them. Their language had been modernized and the texts revised, but only slightly. From the point of view of translation, they added nothing new.

No other Czech translations of Thoreau have been brought out since then, but this will soon change. In 2006, the well-known Czech publisher Paseka reprinted two thousand copies of Schwarz's translation of *Walden*. They sold out within two years, which represents a great success, considering what kind of book it is and how small the Czech market is. Last year, the author of this article asked Paseka if there might be interest in publishing more of Thoreau's works in translation. The response was positive. In the fall of 2009, my Czech version of *Excursions* (without "Night and Moonlight") will appear in bookstores. Four of the essays included in it ("Natural History of Massachusetts," "A Walk to Wachusett," "The Succession of Forest Trees," and

“Wild Apples”) will become available to Czech readers for the first time. Others (“A Winter Walk,” “Walking,” and “Autumnal Tints”) have been newly translated. Several words or phrases that appear in the manuscript of “Walking” in the Concord Free Public Library but which were omitted or changed in the 1863 and later editions have been restored in my translation, based on Thomas Blanding’s transcription of the manuscript in the library.⁸ As “added value,” the book will contain extensive annotations. In order to avoid making the same mistakes as my predecessors, I relied on Ray Angelo’s *Botanical Index* in translating the names of plants. To be as precise as possible, I also consulted a botanist, an ornithologist, a Greek expert, a Latin expert, a historian, a Czech language teacher, and, last but not least, Thoreau specialist Jeff Cramer, who patiently answered my questions and generously shared information with me.

As I observed at the beginning of this article, the history of Czech translations of Thoreau is long. However, it is not as rich as it is long. Czech readers are still waiting for translations of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, *The Maine Woods*, *Cape Cod*, and the journal, as well as for modern, high-quality translations of some of the essays. I hope that they will not once again have to wait for decades. I will, of course, keep readers of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* informed.

Notes

All translations from Czech into English are by the author of the article.

¹ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, ed. J. Lyndon Shanley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 100.

² For Thoreau’s use of this term, see *The Maine Woods*, ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 10.

³ Thoreau, “Walking,” *Excursions*, ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 213.

⁴ Walter Harding and Michael Meyer, *The New Thoreau Handbook* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), 220.

⁵ Henry David Thoreau, “Natural History of Massachusetts,” *Excursions*, ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 27.

⁶ The book only says “Vl. Smetáček.” It is likely that his first name is Vladimír, but it is difficult to find more information on him. There are several people by that name who have translated and / or published a book.

⁷ Biographical information on Pauliny is also difficult to find. He seems to be the translator of a few books on World War II.

⁸ Thoreau, “Walking,” [1862], Henry David Thoreau Papers, Vault A35, Thoreau, Unit I, Series III (Box 2, Folder 1), William Munroe Special Collections, Concord Free Public Library; typed transcript by Thomas Blanding from the “Walking” manuscript in the CFPL, 1975, Vault A35, Thoreau, Unit I, Series III (Box 2, Folder 3).

Thoreau’s Advocacy of Violent Resistance

Jack Doyle

As a high school student, my formal study of Henry David Thoreau’s impact on social reform has been, well, simplified. My American history textbook depicted *one* Thoreau—the man who refused to pay his poll tax in 1846, wrote “Civil Disobedience,” and fathered non-violent resistance, influencing Tolstoy, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. In researching Thoreau’s influence on the civil rights movement, however, I realized that there is more to his political profile than

this idealized portrayal. Susan Gallagher of the Thoreau Society introduced me to Thoreau’s influence on Robert F. Williams, a principled and highly controversial civil rights activist who drew from Thoreau’s writings to justify his call to “meet violence with violence.”¹ In 1959, Williams and King publicly debated whether black citizens should arm themselves in response to government-sanctioned violence.² It became apparent to me in studying this debate between two of Thoreau’s moral descendants that perhaps Williams saw a fierce, dynamic Thoreau that other political reformers—and my American history textbook—had ignored. Rereading Thoreau’s political essays through this unfamiliar lens, I gained a richer understanding of the breadth of his political philosophy. It was clear that Williams, in his belief in the legitimacy of violence to defend himself against a brutal state, was just as true a disciple of Thoreau as his pacifist peers.

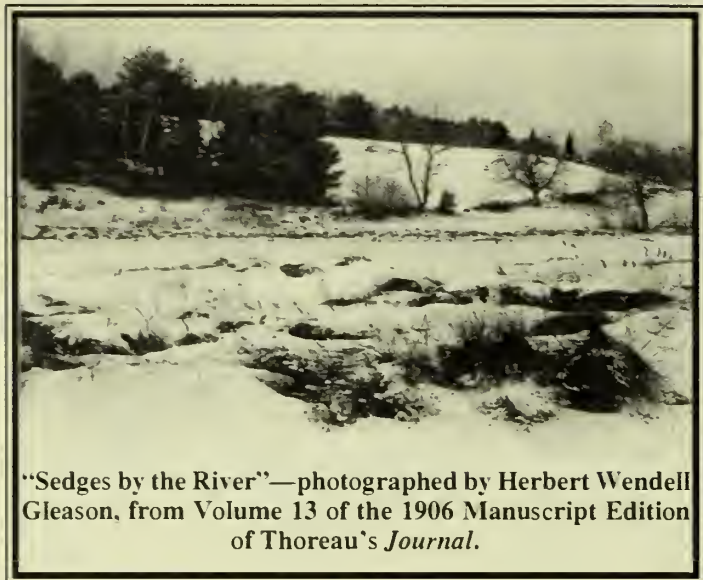
A forefather of the Black Power movement, Williams was well aware that his interpretation of Thoreau was unorthodox. In his 1962 book, *Negroes with Guns*, he wrote:

Henry David Thoreau is idealized as an apostle of non-violence, the writer who influenced Gandhi, and through Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. But Thoreau was not dogmatic; his eyes were open and he saw clearly. I keep with me a copy of Thoreau’s *Plea for Captain John Brown*. There are truths that are just as evident in 1962 as they were in 1859.³

Indeed, Williams’s disillusionment with the corrupt United States justice system and his unwavering sense of individualism reflected the truths that Thoreau had fervently stressed more than a century earlier.

Thoreau’s most influential essay, “Resistance to Civil Government,” was based on the essential concept that “If . . . injustice . . . is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law.”⁴ Thoreau did not make clear, however, *how* one was to break the law—whether through non-violent or violent tactics. He did not explicitly prescribe pacifism. He wrote that the form of the resistance was rightly determined by the individual and specific situation, that the reformer “does only what belongs to himself and to the hour.”⁵ Thus, while he spoke of a “peaceable revolution,” he was not opposed to the possibility that “blood should flow.”⁶ It is significant that Thoreau’s essay was assigned the celebrated title “Civil Disobedience” in 1866—four years after the author’s death.⁷ The title as changed suggested a more passive, peaceful stance than did Thoreau’s blunt “Resistance to Civil Government,” and it resonated after Thoreau’s time. It was the interpretation of famous pacifists such as Gandhi and King—rather than Thoreau’s own words—that established Thoreau’s 1849 essay as the definitive text of non-violent resistance.

Gandhi, King, and others who credit Thoreau for their commitment to peaceful protest didn’t recognize or chose to overlook that over time Thoreau became progressively more open to violent resistance. This change is evident in his later political writings. Thoreau wrote “Slavery in Massachusetts” in 1854 “with the sense of having suffered a vast and indefinite loss.”⁸ Angered by the controversial Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and the well-publicized arrests of African-American “fugitives” Thomas Sims and Anthony Burns, Thoreau explained that “at last it occurred to me that what I had lost was a country.”⁹ This reveals a shift from “Resistance to Civil Government,” published five years earlier, in which Thoreau referred to himself as “a citizen” and asked for “not at once no government, but *at once* a better government.”¹⁰



"Sedges by the River"—photographed by Herbert Wendell Gleason, from Volume 13 of the 1906 Manuscript Edition of Thoreau's *Journal*.

By 1854, Thoreau felt betrayed by his own state, and wrote, "I dwelt before, perhaps, in the illusion that my life passed somewhere only *between* heaven and hell, but now I cannot persuade myself that I do not live *wholly* within hell."¹¹ Thoreau's opinion on violent resistance, at least in respect to a nation that tolerated slavery, was no longer in question. "If we would save our lives," he wrote, "we must fight for them . . . My thoughts are murder to the State, and involuntarily go plotting against her."¹²

Williams, too, became disillusioned with his country. Growing up in a working-class family in Monroe, North Carolina, in the mid-twentieth century, Williams witnessed repeated acts of government-supported aggression by the Ku Klux Klan. He often laughed ruefully that "each time the Klan came on a raid they were led by police cars."¹³ In his published debate with Martin Luther King, Jr., Williams recalled one Klan motorcade in which "drivers of cars tried to run Negroes down," and some Klan members even "caught a Negro woman on the street and tried to force her to dance for them at gun point."¹⁴ In 1958, Williams and the rest of Monroe witnessed the well-known "Kissing Case." In the controversy, two African-American boys, ages eight and ten, were arrested and sentenced to correctional facilities for having participated in a kissing game in which one of the boys kissed an eight-year-old white girl. Just a year later, a pregnant black woman accused a local white man, Lewis Medlin, of having beaten and sexually abused her, with eye-witnesses supporting the woman's story. Medlin, whose attorney explained that he had simply been "drunk and having a little fun," was promptly acquitted in court.¹⁵ Such acts of terrorism and blatant injustice were commonplace in Williams's segregated southern town, in which "lawlessness was rampant" and all "appeals to constituted law were in vain."¹⁶ Just as Thoreau knew that he could not "for an instant recognize that political organization as *my* government which is the *slave's* government also," Williams could not consider himself part of the society that surrounded him.¹⁷

Williams's campaign was founded on a quintessentially American reverence for the dignity of the individual and for freedom—the same moral outlook articulated in "Resistance to Civil Government" and "A Plea for Captain John Brown." Although Williams admitted, like Thoreau, that "as an individual, I'm not inclined toward 'politics,'" he led the local NAACP until 1959, when he was dismissed for distributing guns among his

townsmen.¹⁸ He and his followers began to organize shifts of armed guards who patrolled the streets and homes of African-American families in Monroe. As Williams wrote in 1962, "where the law is unable, or unwilling, to enforce order, the citizens can, and must, act in self-defense against lawless violence."¹⁹ In a speech to the NAACP board in 1959, Williams defended his position: "We as men should stand up as men and protect our women and children. I am a man and I will walk upright as a man should. I will not crawl."²⁰ It's hard not to hear echoes of Thoreau's ardent individualism. In "Resistance to Civil Government" Thoreau wrote, "I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion . . . They can only force me who obey a higher law than I."²¹

FBI director J. Edgar Hoover lamented in 1961 that Williams "has become something of a 'John Brown' to Negroes around Monroe."²² Hoover's comparison wasn't entirely accurate. Williams and his followers never killed anyone. They armed themselves in self-defense and used guns to deter physical violence, not to initiate it, as Brown had. But Williams had the same depth of character and moral purpose that Thoreau fervently admired in Brown. Thoreau wrote of Brown that "the reason why such greatly superior numbers quailed before him was, as one of his prisoners confessed, because they *lacked a cause*—a kind of armor which he and his party never lacked."²³ This description applies to Williams—he employed violent resistance in service to *a cause*, making the act in itself noble and transcendent. In a letter to Thomas Cholmondeley in October 1856, Thoreau wrote, "But as for politics, what I most admire now-a-days, is not the regular governments but the irregular primitive ones, like the Vigilance committee in California and even the free state men in Kansas. They are the most divine."²⁴ It's easy to imagine that Thoreau would have also admired the Black Guard, Williams's primitive organization of "armed self-defense" in Monroe. Thoreau would have recognized in it the same "divine" quality as the Vigilance committee and the free-state men in "Bloody Kansas." Williams's group sought to defend its dignity and liberty rather than passively submit to the corrupt authority of the state.

In the autumn of 1959, in dueling articles in consecutive issues of the magazine *Liberation*, Williams squared off against Martin Luther King, Jr., in a pivotal public argument about the most effective tactics for the civil rights fight. Anne Braden, editor of the newsletter *Southern Patriot*, termed it the "great debate."²⁵ Williams argued that "it is obvious that the federal government will not put an end to lynching: therefore it becomes necessary for us to stop lynching with violence."²⁶ King responded with his espousal of "the social organization of non-violence." King acknowledged that "violence exercised in self-defense" was accepted as moral and legal in all societies, and that even when "involving weapons and bloodshed, [it] has never been condemned, even by Gandhi." Ignoring the fact that violence as required for self-defense was precisely what Williams promoted, King suggested that Williams belonged to a different camp, "the advocacy of violence as a tool of advancement, organized as in warfare, deliberately and consciously."²⁷

The promotion of "aggressive violence by Negroes to attack white people," argued Anne Braden in the *Southern Patriot*, was not Williams's stance. "Williams never advocated this," she wrote, explaining that he simply armed his African-American community in order to deter Klan violence.²⁸ What Williams and King both failed to realize, notes Timothy Tyson in *Radio Free Dixie* (a biography of Williams), was that "the philosophical position from which King centered his argument—preferring nonviolence

but endorsing the principle of self-defense . . . was in fact the same position that Williams had taken."²⁹ Tyson explains that Williams supported a "flexible" resistance, encouraging non-violent tactics while also supporting the necessary use of violence. In fact, in March 1960, Williams led sit-ins at the local Jones's Drug Store and was promptly arrested and thrown in jail. Similar to Thoreau's belief that prison is "the true place for a just man," Williams considered himself "honored," and later recalled, "I have never felt prouder in my life."³⁰

As the similar stances of Williams and King demonstrated, the "great debate" was not a battle between two different interpretations of Thoreau's political writings. In nearly two decades of political writing, from "Resistance to Civil Government" to "The Last Days of John Brown," Thoreau was consistent in his call for conscientious opposition to injustice. What mattered for Thoreau was the moral imperative to take action, not the form of the resistance. As he explained in "A Plea for Captain John Brown," "The question is not about the weapon, but the spirit in which you use it."³¹ Thoreau was not, as my textbook had depicted him, strictly a believer in tax resistance, protests, strikes, and sit-ins. With his unwavering proclamations of the morality and power of resistance to unjust laws, Thoreau inspired the militant resister and the pacifist reformer alike in the belief that "Action from principle,—the perception and the performance of right,—changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary."³²

Notes

¹ Susan E. Gallagher is Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and a member of the Board of Directors of the Thoreau Society. The quote is from Robert F. Williams, *Negroes with Guns* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 83.

² Robert F. Williams, "Is Violence Necessary to Combat Injustice? For the Positive: Williams Says 'We Must Fight Back,'" *The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991).

³ Williams, *Negroes With Guns*, 83.

⁴ Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government," *Reform Papers*, ed. Wendell Glick (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 73.

⁵ Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government," 84.

⁶ Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government," 76, 77.

⁷ Philip Van Doren Stern, *The Annotated Walden* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1970), 80.

⁸ Thoreau, "Slavery in Massachusetts," *Reform Papers*, 106.

⁹ Thoreau, "Slavery in Massachusetts," 106.

¹⁰ Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government," 64.

¹¹ Thoreau, "Slavery in Massachusetts," 106.

¹² Thoreau, "Slavery in Massachusetts," 108.

¹³ Williams, "Is Violence Necessary to Combat Injustice?," 111.

¹⁴ Williams, "Is Violence Necessary to Combat Injustice?," 111.

¹⁵ Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 148.

¹⁶ Williams, "Is Violence Necessary to Combat Injustice?," 112.

¹⁷ Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government," 67.

¹⁸ Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 155.

¹⁹ Williams, *Negroes with Guns*, 3.

²⁰ Williams, *Negroes with Guns*, xxiv.

²¹ Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government," 80-81.

²² Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 284.

²³ Thoreau, "A Plea for Captain John Brown," *Reform Papers*, 117.

²⁴ Thoreau, quoted in Stern, *The Annotated Walden*, 104.

²⁵ Anne Braden, *Southern Patriot* (January 1960), quoted in Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 211.

²⁶ Williams, "Is Violence Necessary to Combat Injustice?," 112.

²⁷ Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Social Organization of Non-Violence," *Eyes on the Prize*, 113.

²⁸ Anne Braden, *Southern Patriot* (January 1960), quoted in Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 217.

²⁹ Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 216.

³⁰ Williams, quoted in Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 219.

³¹ Thoreau, "A Plea for Captain John Brown," 133.

³² Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government," 72.

www.thoreausociety.org

The 19th-Century Concord Digital Archive

Amy E. Earhart

Imagine being able to map the travels Thoreau describes in his journal on a particular day. Imagine following a Concord neighborhood through a period of time, visually tracing the movements of people in and out of houses, and quickly locating references to these individuals in particular literary works. These are possibilities that the 19th-Century Concord Digital Archive (CDA) will open to scholars.¹ The CDA is a long-term digital project that gathers cultural records of Concord, Massachusetts, from 1800 to 1865 in an interactive site, encouraging researchers to combine textual and visual materials in new and innovative ways. It aims to facilitate groundbreaking scholarship through unique searchable access to digitized literary and historical materials.

The 19th-Century Concord Digital Archive will make available historical documentation of Concord, Massachusetts, in a free-access digital archive. The materials included in the archive will set the Concord authors in context with groups that have traditionally been underdocumented in textual sources—free African-Americans, Irish immigrants, the poor, and the criminal class. Inspection of the documents identified for inclusion in the archive suggests that the interaction between these multiple groups was far more complex than scholars have realized.

While the archive will include Concord's well-known nineteenth-century writers (Thoreau among them), its goal is broader than a traditional edition of a particular writer or group of writers. The CDA is a town-based archive that locates particular writers within the context of their environment—their neighbors, their town governance structures, their social milieu, and more. However, the CDA will not perpetuate the "cult of the New England Village," to use a phrase coined by Lawrence Buell, who argues that towns like Concord functioned "as a social model and as literary and mythic images—thanks partly to the New England influence, in each case—throughout much of America as a whole."² The project seeks instead to reveal the intricate and intertwining relationships of those who lived and wrote in Concord—a unique, specific place—while also inviting the scholar to revisit the concept of the New England village and engage with new and emerging critical approaches to scholarly work.

The inspiration and model for the CDA comes from current work in the digital humanities field. Exemplary projects such as the Walt Whitman Archive and the Rossetti Archive are models of sound scholarly editorial practice applied to open-access digitization of literary documents. My invitation to the 2005 NINES workshop held at the University of Virginia was crucial to the development of the project. Founded by Jerome McGann, NINES (Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-Century Electronic Scholarship) has been developing evaluation processes for digital projects and tools to facilitate aggregate use of scholarly

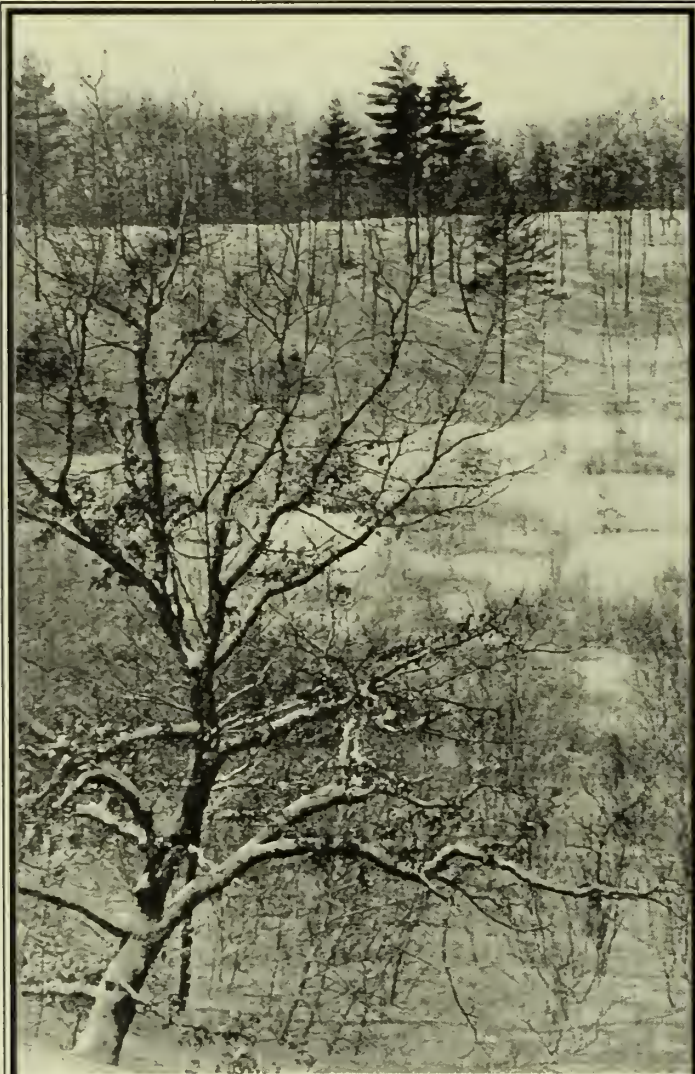


Image by Herbert Wendell Gleason to illustrate the poem
"Winter," from *Through the Year with Thoreau* (1917).

materials. I continue to work with NINES, the leading organization for digital production of nineteenth-century literature, and was recently appointed to its Americanist and Executive boards. Work with NINES encourages the best digital scholarly practices and the vetting of materials by peer review.

The CDA has garnered grant support of more than \$40,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities and other funding sources. We intend to apply for additional external funding necessary to expand the project.

While the archive is founded on a solid foundation of editorial work, it also draws upon new techniques of visualization and mapping. Many scholars who work with Concord discuss the importance of location, physical structures, and landscape within a variety of literary texts, but the way in which these textual materials might be explored in standard print presentations is limited. Too often a digital archive is merely an electronic repository of static texts, rather than a carefully constructed set of data that includes innovative interfaces and/or interpretive visuals. And, given the importance of the geography and landscape of Concord, a visual means of addressing humanities information creates interesting new modes of research.

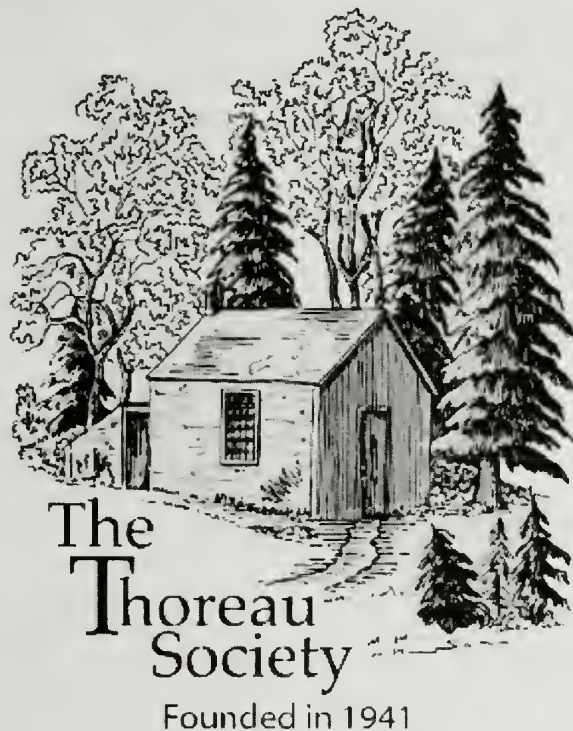
The development of the CDA would not be possible without the partnership of the Concord Free Public Library, as shaped by Leslie Wilson, Curator of the William Munroe Special Collections there. The Special Collections of the Concord Free Public Library forms the primary archive of Concord history, life, landscape, literature, and people from 1635 to the present time, and as such constitutes the major repository and comprehensive interpretive agency for the town. A recently signed legal contract between the CDA and the Concord Free Public Library allows us to develop and test shared materials, metadata, searches, and interfaces. This collaboration permits creation of searchability across separately owned, separately hosted, and separately maintained digital resources.

Materials to be digitized and made searchable include literary texts, historical documents, maps, photographs, census materials, educational reports, broadsides, physical artifacts, and town records. However, our first efforts have focused on a much smaller set of materials to enable the development of a sound technology infrastructure. Our initial set of texts has focused on Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. We will be adding materials related to the dedication of the cemetery, such as the 1855 broadside "Fourth of July Breakfast and Floral Exhibit," which includes a song and poem by Frank Sanborn and Emerson's "Address to the Inhabitants of Concord, at the Consecration of Sleepy Hollow," plus related broadside materials. We are also transcribing and editing the *Reports of the Selectmen and Other Officers of the Town of Concord* (1841-1865) and Concord census materials, and adding selected historical maps. Connecting a variety of texts and documents with visual materials through technology will result in a rich resource for scholars in many fields.

The project applies standard editorial practices and the blended use of databases and TEI/XML markup of texts, the de facto international standard for encoding texts in the humanities. This means that a keyword search draws upon an editorially constructed set of metadata attached to the internal workings of the text. Rather than the lighter description found in a library database, the metadata process we use allows us to connect all mentions of particular people and places. The ability to find every reference to Sam Staples (Thoreau's jailer and town dogcatcher), for example, offers clear possibilities. The printed Concord town reports reveal how many dogs Staples caught each year, how large a paycheck he received for such work, his additional town work for hire, and more. One may discover, too, references in Thoreau's journals and texts to Staples, or to dogs or dogcatchers. Other sources will yield information about Staples's position in the Middlesex County administrative structure. Through other site features, users will be able to physically identify, place, and visualize his various Concord homes. By relying upon the computer to complete initial searches, the scholar is free to concentrate on understanding the text, the historical moment, and the literary construction. In addition, our metadata ensures that our materials may also interact with other texts across the Web that are so encoded.

We are currently working with the Map and GIS Collections Librarians at Texas A&M University to position various historical maps within the environment of Google Earth. By overlaying maps, including selected Thoreau surveys in the Concord Free Public Library collections, the scholar is able to envision the past and present in ways previously impossible. Thoreau often included considerable natural and environmental detail in his work. In his 1853 "Plan of a New Road from the N.E. Burying Ground in Concord to William Pedrick's House" (7i in the CFPL Thoreau

Founded in 1941, The Thoreau Society, Inc. is the oldest and largest organization devoted to an American author.



See Inside

Annual Gathering Preview

Online Auction Rescheduled to February 24-March 17, 2010

Call for Nominations

Membership Renewal Form

Thoreau and Transcendentalism: Then & Now

Thursday-Sunday, July 8-11, 2010

The Thoreau Society Annual Gathering takes place annually on the weekend closest to Henry D. Thoreau's birthday (born July 12, 1817). If you or your business would like to become a sponsor of the Annual Gathering, please contact Margaret Gram at 978-369-5310 for more information.

Annual Gathering Preview

Special Event at The Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods, Lincoln, MA

To be determined

Emerson Society Panel co-sponsored by the Fuller Society

Thursday Evening, Masonic Temple

"Transcendental Conversations"

chair/moderator: Leslie Eckel, Suffolk University

1. "From Schoolroom to Cosmos: Margaret Fuller and Bronson Alcott in Conversation," Leslie Eckel, Suffolk University

2. "Transcendentalism's Private World: Fuller and Sturgis in Newport," Kathleen Lawrence, George Washington University

3. "Rich in Friends, Rich in Experiences, Rich in Culture: Notes on Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and Friendship," Iuliu Ratiu, SUNY-Albany

4. "Margaret and Her Friends: Dall, Emerson, and the Gender Politics of Transcendental Conversation," Tiffany K. Wayne, independent scholar, Santa Cruz, CA

"All the World is Seashore"

Friday, July 9, 2010, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Concord Free Public Library: Registered Annual Gathering participants are cordially invited to attend a special reception for Kristina Joyce. Refreshments, including wine and beer, will be served. Enjoy the opportunity for display viewing and a brief program. The exhibition--a collaboration between the library's William Munroe Special Collections and Concord artist Kristina Joyce--will feature Kristina's artwork and calligraphy, art from the CFPL's permanent collection, freshwater shells from Concord, observations by Thoreau, and a selection from the

CFPL's holdings of photographs by Alfred Winslow Hosmer and Herbert Wendell Gleason. Clamshell Hill--a Native American freshwater midden on the Sudbury River in Concord--will form a focus of the display. Kristina will speak briefly at the reception.

Keynote Address

Saturday, July 10, 2010

The Dana S. Brigham Memorial Keynote Address will be given by Megan Marshall, who is the author of two nonfiction books and has published numerous essays and reviews in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Slate Online*, *The New York Times Book*

Review, *The London Review of Books*, *The New Republic*, *The Boston Review*, and elsewhere. Her biography *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism* (2005) won the Francis Parkman Prize, awarded by the Society of American Historians; the Mark Lynton History Prize, awarded by the Anthony Lukas Prize Project jointly sponsored by the Columbia School of Journalism and Harvard's Nieman Foundation; the Massachusetts Book Award in nonfiction; and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in biography and memoir. Marshall has been the recipient of fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Massachusetts Artists Foundation, and she has been a fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society since 1991. During 2006-2007 she was a fellow in creative nonfiction writing at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University where she began work on a biography of Ebe Hawthorne, Nathaniel's brilliant and reclusive older sister.



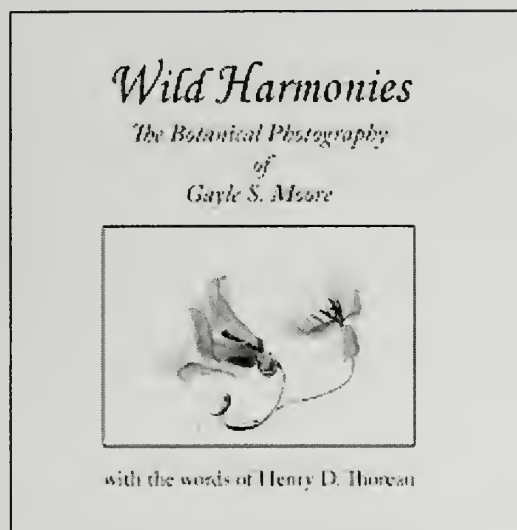
Performance with Henry D. Thoreau

To be determined

Kevin Radaker
Professor and Chair, English Department
Anderson University



"Wild Harmonies" - Gallery Exhibit



Available at TTS Shop at Walden Pond
www.shopatwaldenpond.org

**Open House at the Birth Home of
Henry D. Thoreau**
Sunday, July 11, 2010

Renovations completed, spring 2010!



**Thoreau Society/Orchard House Panel Discussion
School of Philosophy**
Sunday, July 11, 2010

**What Were We Born to Do? The "New Women"
of the Transcendental Era.**

Phyllis Cole
Helen Deese
Megan Marshall
John Matteson

Panel on Thoreau, Science, and the Humanities
To be determined

1. Edward Fiske Mooney

Departments of Religion and Philosophy, Syracuse U
Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, Cal. State, Sonoma

2. Laura Dassow Walls

John H. Bennett, Jr. Chair of Southern Letters
University of South Carolina

3. Tom Potter

President of The Thoreau Society

Other Events

The 2010 Annual Gathering will feature a large number of walks, talks, workshops, and special events over four days. Whether you have never missed one, or are new to The Thoreau Society, or have always wanted to attend an Annual Gathering but never have, then you will not want to miss out on this year's events in Concord, Massachusetts, [birthplace of New England Transcendentalism](#).

Annual Gathering Lodging Options

The Colonial Inn, 48 Monument Square, Concord MA 01742
[in Concord center] (800) 370-9200 or (978) 369-9200
<http://www.concordscolonialinn.com>
Prescott Wing, \$149 / night; Main Inn, \$169 / night; reserve by phone by June 8, 2010.

North Bridge Inn, 21 Monument Street, Concord MA 01742
[close to Concord center] (888) 530-0007
<http://www.northbridgeinn.com>
Discount rate = \$135. Two Rooms Available. Book by June 30.

The Hawthorne Inn, 462 Lexington Road, Concord MA 01742
[0.8 east of Concord center, near Orchard House]
(978) 369-5610 <http://www.concordmass.com>
\$159-250/night. First come first serve.

Best Western at Historic Concord, 740 Elm Street, Concord MA 01742 [2 miles to Concord center] (978) 369-6100.
<http://www.bestwestern.com>
20 rooms available; reserve by June 10, 2010, \$99/night

Quality Inn, 440 Bedford St., Lexington, MA, US, 02420
(8 miles to Concord center) Phone: (781) 861-0850

Bedford Motel, 30 North Road, Routes 4 & 225, Bedford MA 01730 [6 miles to Concord center] (781) 275-6300

Bedford Plaza Hotel, 340 Great Road, Bedford MA 01730
[7 miles to Concord center] (781) 275-6700
<http://www.bedfordplazahotel.com>

Friendly Crossways International Youth Hostel, 247 Littleton County Road, Harvard MA 01451
(978) 456-9386 [13 miles to Concord center via Route 2]
<http://www.friendlycrossroads.com>

Nominations Requested for The Thoreau Society Board of Directors and the CNE

If you wish to nominate someone for a position on The Thoreau Society Board of Directors, please send the name and contact information of that person, plus your rationale for making the nomination, to

Kevin Van Anglen:

• Email: Vananglenkp@aol.com

• Mail: 341 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742

Please be sure that you have discussed the nomination with the nominee, that the person is a member of The Thoreau Society, and that the person is willing to serve.

All nominations must be submitted/ postmarked by May 3, 2010.

Members of the Committee on Nominations and Elections (CNE) do not have a term limit but must be elected each year. The current elected members of the committee are Michael Berger, C. David Luther, and Gary Scharnhorst.

Michael Berger is going off the CNE as an elected member in July 2010, so we need nominations for his position. Please send the nomination as indicated above.

Why an online auction?

Thoreau Society members live all over this country and all over the world. The auction gives everyone an opportunity to participate as donors and bidders. It doesn't matter where you are - you can be part of this annual event.

In previous auctions, Thoreau Society members and others have donated walks, talks, picnics, hand-crafted products, musical instruments, CDs, DVDs, Books and other items that profile the unique talents of those interested in Henry D. Thoreau

More than a fund raiser, this event brings people from around the world together in a single exciting event.

Visit: <http://www.biddingforgood.com/thoreausociety>

Signup for email updates
Donate Now
Tell your friends
Bid to WIN!

February 24-March 17, 2010

All proceeds support The Thoreau Society,
a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please check the outside of your envelope for your membership renewal date to see if you need to renew at this time. You can use this form to renew your membership today or save it in your records for use at a later date.

Membership Levels

Individual (US/Canada/Mexico)*\$45
Family (US/Canada/Mexico)*\$60
Student (US/Canada/Mexico)*\$25
Sustaining.....\$80
* international memberships, add.....\$10

Donor Circles (includes membership)

Maine Woods.....\$100
Cape Cod.....\$250
Concord & Merrimack.....\$500
Walden.....\$1,000
Life Membership.....\$1,250

Library Subscription

(US/Canada/Mexico).....\$75
All Other Library Subscription.....\$90

Friends of Walden Pond Donation.....

Bradley P. Dean Memorial Fund

(supports publication of TSB).....

Total Amount.....

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Country: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

___ Check (payable to the Thoreau Society)

___ Credit Card (circle one): MC Visa Amex Disc

Card #: _____ Exp: ____/____

Signature: _____

survey collection³), he presented not only the topography of the landscape but also the swamps along the projected road. (These would need draining to ensure the roadbed's stability.) When the survey is overlaid on a contemporary map in Google Earth, the user not only sees how the particular environment has shifted over time, but can manipulate the map to explore (through the layering of other images) changes in the built and natural landscape, to study locations from different angles, and more.

In addition to the visual possibilities offered by map overlays, the project will allow the scholar to browse textual materials through typical scholarly interfaces such as an index and keyword search and through a map interface. The map will have various on-and-off keyword buttons, allowing the scholar to sift textual materials through historical and contemporary maps in search of appropriate links and connections, aided by editorially constructed categories. For example, you might look for references to Irishman John Field, who figures large in Thoreau's *Walden*. Relying on keyword buttons to define time period, gender, nationality, profession, and title of literary text, you will locate Field. From that point, you may want to pinpoint his residences over a period of time and to chart the ethnic, class, and professional makeup of his neighbors to see if his social position shifted as he moved from place to place. You might discover that Field was mentioned in a Thoreau journal entry (that for August 23, 1845), and could compare Thoreau's discussion of his neighbor there with his reference in *Walden*. You might also find that Field is listed as living in Lincoln in the 1850 census. Moreover, the search capabilities that we are constructing will permit scholars to select from multiple categories to mix and match search terms, allowing ready identification of pertinent information. The ability to create an archive that works with a broad range of Concord-related sources to accomplish by machine the "grunt work" associated with archive use will aid the scholar in quickly finding the materials most useful for a particular research pursuit.

While we have made progress in developing an initial model for the CDA, there is much more to do. And, as the course of other digital projects suggests, the most successful are those based on input from the scholarly community. I will work at editing and markup of materials related to Concord; the staff of the Concord Free Public Library Special Collections will continue to select and digitize parts of the library's collections for its website⁴; and all parties involved hope that interested scholars will consider participation in the CDA. The Texas A&M University team will remain responsible for developing the technological infrastructure and visualization tools that underpin the project, but there are a number of ways in which individual scholars might contribute. In our practice of scholarship, we often find materials that are related to our work but are unlikely to be published. Sometimes this material is shared among a small scholarly group, but not disseminated across the broader profession. It may be of a "notes and queries" type of interest, useful but inappropriate for full-scale exposition. If you have a broadside, a note, a transcribed newspaper article, or other item related to Concord, we might well be interested in adding it (or the information within it) to the CDA. We will take care to properly credit all materials used, to maintain professional editorial standards, and to add the metadata that will make all such contributions useful for scholarship. Materials will be vetted by the CDA board to ensure the quality of the site.

I recognize that there may not be immediate scholarly reward for participation in the CDA. The project inhabits a digital environment outside the print culture traditionally valued by tenure and promotion committees. However, review and

oversight by the CDA board will hold the project to editorial standards equal to those applied to print scholarship. Further, digitization allows scholarly inquiry that can't be conducted in the print-bound medium. The intellectual rewards of participation in the CDA lie in the development of a searchable body of material that will creatively enhance scholarship. Your participation in this project will not only help us to develop digitized materials of use to the greater scholarly community, but will allow you to explore an important literary town in productively original ways.

If you would like more information about the CDA or to discuss participating in it, please contact Amy Earhart at aeahart@tamu.edu. Questions about the Concord Free Public Library's role should be addressed to Leslie Wilson at lwilson@minlib.net.

Notes

¹ The CDA (as so far developed) is accessible on the Web at <http://www.digitalconcord.org/>.

² Lawrence Buell, *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 305.

³ Accessible on the Concord Free Public Library website at http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/7i.htm.

⁴ Note that an antebellum Concord newspaper project is currently underway, as is the preparation of a transcription in electronic form of the diary of John Shepard Keyes.

Passions for Nature: A Review

Richard J. Schneider

Rochelle Johnson. *Passions for Nature: Nineteenth-Century America's Aesthetics of Alienation*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009. 300 p.

The nineteenth-century "American Renaissance" is commonly viewed as the beginning of an essentially ecological vision of nature in American culture. Writers such as Emerson and Thoreau are viewed as advocates for greater attention to and greater preservation of nature. In *Passions for Nature*, however, Rochelle Johnson reminds us that attitudes toward nature in nineteenth-century America were more complicated than is generally acknowledged.

The plural in Johnson's title refers to two conflicting American cultural "passions" toward nature. The dominant passion views nature essentially as a metaphor for American experience that focuses nature's value in humanity, an attitude ecocritics have often termed "anthropocentric" or "human-centered." This attitude views nature as an abstraction, not valuable in its own right. The second, less prevalent passion is a counteraesthetic which views nature as having value in itself apart from any use that it might have for humanity, an attitude often termed "biocentric" or "ecocentric."

These conflicting attitudes have been much discussed regarding twentieth-century and current American culture, but Johnson argues that this conflict was present even in American Renaissance cultural figures who seemed most passionate about nature. Uncovering this conflict, she says, "shakes up the typical story of nineteenth-century American passion for nature and draws our attention to some inconsistencies in our familiar story of the ideal relationship to nature" (4).

In her introduction, Johnson establishes the historical context for nineteenth-century Americans' attitude toward nature.

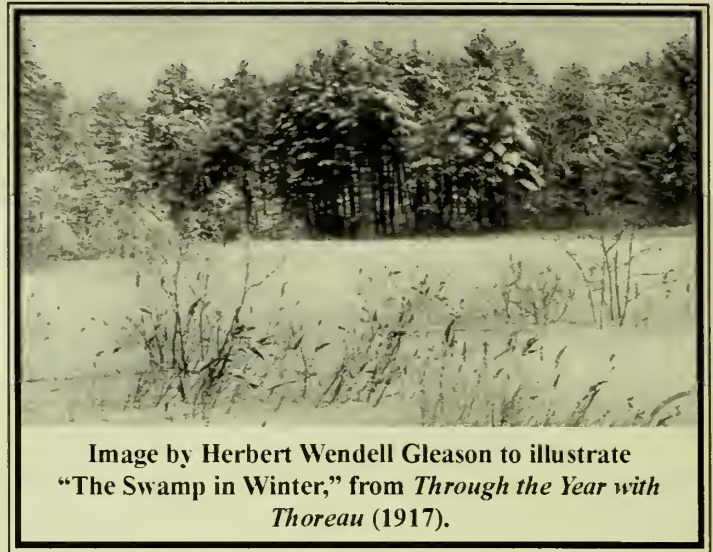
Combined with the rapid increase in print culture, the shift away from an agricultural to an urban culture fostered increased abstract knowledge about natural history through discourse and images in keepsakes, paintings, and biblical histories, without encouraging Americans actually to go into nature to observe its details. As the unified study of "natural history" rapidly split into the "two cultures" of the humanities and the sciences, literate Americans learned to love the idea of nature but left knowledge of its details to the scientists.

The writer whom Johnson offers as the touchstone figure both to illustrate and counteract this separation from nature is Susan Fenimore Cooper, daughter of James Fenimore Cooper and author of *Rural Hours*. "Cooper's works are valuable," she asserts, "because they simultaneously illuminate her contemporaries' metaphoric passions for nature and point to a largely forgotten way of expressing love for the nonhuman environment, one that is not primarily metaphoric" (19). *Rural Hours*, published in 1850 (four years before Thoreau's *Walden*), contains daily observations of nature around Cooper's home in Cooperstown, New York. It was much admired by readers for its simplicity and honesty of observation of nature's details. In it Cooper suggests that Americans' love of nature should include three essential elements, which Johnson defines as "1) a solid knowledge of natural history, 2) frequent and detailed observation of natural life forms, and 3) an approach to one's physical surroundings based in humility" (28).

Regarding history, Cooper suggests that our understanding should include not only human achievements, but also the history of natural phenomena, among them seasonal changes, the history of specific species such as trees, the migration of invasive species from the Old World to America, and even references to nature in literary tradition. She also affirms that a true love of nature must include careful observation of its details, and she clings to the Linnean belief that being able to name an object is an essential part of knowing it. Humility in turn should suggest that nature has value beyond human knowledge or use—one, Johnson suggests, "beyond economic gain, human understanding, and even Christian tenets" (52). This belief leads Cooper to a passionate call for the preservation of forests and a "lament for a wounded landscape" (62).

While Cooper attempted to teach her readers to relate more fully to nature, she nonetheless (as Johnson acknowledges) could not entirely avoid the dominant American attitudes toward nature. Three elements of the attitude toward nature as abstract metaphor can all be found in *Rural Hours*: confidence in American progress, the use of nature to refine human behavior and taste, and the ability of nature to improve the human mind. Cooper thus effectively represents the two American "passions" toward nature, because "ultimately, there is a tension in Cooper's works that results from her adherence to the popular metaphorical stories of nature and her unmistakable desire to move beyond those stories" (65).

After establishing Cooper as her touchstone figure, Johnson devotes chapters to three iconic nineteenth-century cultural leaders who represent the elements of the passion for nature as metaphor. Her representative of America's confidence in history as progress is painter Thomas Cole. The "picturesque aesthetic" of Cole's paintings typically depicts "landscape scenes that also evinced evidence of thriving, rural settlements," usually containing a human figure who "signaled the ideal, domestic state of the scene pictured" and generally painted from a high perspective looking down on the scene to provide viewers "with a sense of control over the landscape" (72).



While acknowledging that Cole did sometimes paint uniquely "wild" American scenes, Johnson emphasizes the many Cole paintings in which he employs the picturesque aesthetic of progress and domesticity. She sees even Cole's famous "View from Mount Holyoke . . . The Oxbow" (frequently described by critics as combining the sublimely wild with the picturesque) as silencing the history of the losses in the natural scene in favor of praise for its more domesticated beauty. Cole asserts "a passion for 'wildness' as the basis for cultural identity while simultaneously celebrating massive development of those same wild landscapes" (78). Cole's most famous series of paintings, *The Course of Empire*, depicts the same scene viewed at different epochs of history to show the rise and fall of a human empire as a warning to American culture to take a "cautious approach to changing the land and a vigilant guard against luxury or complacency" (84). Even when Cole acknowledged the negative effects of progress, however, American culture was too caught up in its fervor for progress to heed the warning, preferring what Robert Abrams terms "historical amnesia" (110).

Johnson sees Cooper as offering a more realistic view than Cole's of the losses both to nature and to Native Americans incurred by American progress. Passages in *Rural Hours* are devoted to the historical role that Native Americans have played in the American landscape and to the need to preserve forests and natural springs as historical markers. Despite Cooper's conflation of Native Americans with nature (an attitude of which many Americans, including Thoreau, were guilty), Johnson sees Cooper's questioning of America's ethic of progress as atypical for her time.

Johnson's representative of nineteenth-century America's view of nature as a teacher of refinement is Andrew Jackson Downing, a leader of the popular landscape design movement based on the premise that creating a beautiful natural environment around one's home through horticulture and gardening led to good taste, which in turn improved morality. Downing's emphasis on taste was itself based on theories offered by the "common sense" philosopher Alexander Alison, who viewed taste as (in Johnson's words) "the capacity of the human intellect to detect and delight in the beautiful" (118). The assumption behind both Downing's and Alison's theories was essentially anthropocentric: that humans give significance to nature.

Cooper sympathized with much that Downing aimed for.

She agreed with him that “orderly domestic settings symbolized gentility and the improvement of America” (137). However, she sought to extend this idea beyond domesticated nature into human attention to more “natural” environments. Her reaction to Downing thus illustrates her complex and conflicted attitude toward nature, one representative of American attitudes in general: “Cooper’s passion is our passion: tasteful, refined, safe, domesticated—and, sadly, paralyzed” (145).

Ralph Waldo Emerson represents the third metaphorical passion for nature as a metaphor for reason. Johnson rightly sees the crux of Emerson’s view of nature as his concept of nature as language. Her explication of this concept in his seminal book *Nature* is at first quite conventional. Emerson believed that by seeing nature correctly as symbol humans could achieve the promise of their own capacity for reason. Thus nature was a means to an end, not an end in itself. Johnson’s conclusion about Emerson, however, is anything but conventional. “Emerson’s promise,” she argues, “is dangerous, because it offers humanity the possibility of controlling and dominating the physical world by defining nature as an embodiment of reason” (161).

By contrast, Johnson argues that Susan Fenimore Cooper sees nature not as a means to an end but as “means *and* end” (147; emphasis Johnson’s). While Emerson’s use of nature as symbol prescribes how humans might use nature as power to achieve progress, Cooper offers a vision of nature leading to a sense of wonder, gratitude, and humility that instead fosters preservation.

Cooper’s kindred spirit in her alternate passion for a more literal and humble view of nature is Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau’s view of language, Johnson argues, is closer to Cooper’s than to Emerson’s. Although he often does use nature as symbol, Thoreau strives toward a language “without metaphor” similar to Cooper’s more literal vision of nature.¹ Johnson acknowledges the strong symbolic elements in Thoreau’s *Walden*, but she emphasizes those parts of the book in which Thoreau acknowledges the limitations of seeing nature as metaphor. She focuses on the “Sounds” chapter in which Thoreau seeks to be “looking always at what is to be seen”² and on Thoreau’s description of his game of hide-and-seek with the loon in the “Brute Neighbors” chapter. In this latter episode, Thoreau at first seeks to dominate and control the loon by attempting to predict where it will surface next after a dive. Eventually, however, he must acknowledge his inability to predict the loon’s actions and admits that it is a part of nature “beyond his human understanding, and one certainly beyond the

abstracting powers of metaphor” (Johnson 199). Such incidents lead Thoreau toward a humility about nature akin to Cooper’s.

Johnson hews to the by-now conventional (though still debatable) view of Thoreau’s shift in 1850 “away from metaphor and toward conveying the literalness of natural phenomena through description” in his later natural history writings. Since we do not know what Thoreau would have done with many of these later writings, we perhaps assume too much to assert, as Johnson does, that “Thoreau abandoned metaphor altogether” in his late-life work (191). Nonetheless, Thoreau’s later career as we know it does seem to ally him more closely to Cooper’s literal understanding of nature than to Emerson’s metaphorical view.

This desire to affirm that “facts of natural history were valuable in and of themselves” (213) is what Johnson sees as uniting Cooper and Thoreau. The desire to find a language beyond metaphor, she says, indicates how both Cooper and Thoreau “struggled with the relationship between nature and culture—a relationship that has remained contested in the environmental humanities” (218). She acknowledges that seeing nature without metaphor is probably impossible. However, she seems justified in asserting that “we certainly want to recognize when our assumptions about the natural world alienate us from our surroundings in ways that can cause harm to both ourselves and our world” (221).

Johnson concludes by demonstrating how conflicting passions toward nature in the nineteenth century persist into the twenty-first century. The passion for nature as a metaphor for progress has been “canalized” (an inelegant but apt term used by evolutionary biologists and ecologists) into an unchanging dominant attitude privileging individual human experience and progress over the primacy and preservation of the physical world and leading to our ignorance of our own natural environment. She argues instead for a counteraesthetics of humility toward nature modeled by Cooper and Thoreau and based “on a detailed knowledge of its particulars” (236).

Passions for Nature provides an excellent example of how the interdisciplinarity of ecocriticism can lead to important new insights. While firmly grounded in literary studies, Johnson is most interesting and effective when she connects literature to the broader American culture through philosophy, the visual arts, landscape design, and the natural sciences. In doing so, she offers valuable new insights and a strong argument for resisting the “canalizing” of the humanities and the sciences into “two cultures” and for seeking the benefits of reuniting them.

Notes

¹ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, ed. J. Lyndon Shanley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 111.

² Thoreau, *Walden*, 111.

Additions to the Thoreau Bibliography

Robert N. Hudspeth

Atkinson, Jay. “Depth and Purity: Communing with Thoreau at the Pond.” *New York Times* (October 2, 2009): C 31.

Chura, Patrick. “Resisting the Absurd: Thoreau in Lithuania.” *Thoreau Society Bulletin* No. 268 (Fall 2009): 1-3.



“The Leaning Hemlocks in Winter”—photograph by Herbert Wendell Gleason, from Volume 6 of the 1906 Manuscript Edition of Thoreau’s *Journal*.

- Clary, Amy. "(Un)Mapping the Wild: John Krakauer's *Into the Wild*, Thoreau's *Walden*, and the Textuality of Wilderness." In *On and Off the Page: Mapping Place in Text and Culture*. Ed. M. B. Hackler and Ari J. Adipurwawidjana. Newcastle upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars, 2009. 347p. hardcover (ISBN 1443805688), £44.99. Pp. 167-185.
- Conrad, Randall. "Unerring Metaphor": A Culture War in Thoreau's Day." *Thoreau Society Bulletin* No. 268 (Fall 2009): 3-6.
- Duran, Jane. "Bronson Alcott: Transcendentalism in the Personal." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 45, No. 2 (Spring 2009): 231-239. Compares Alcott's ideas of personal growth with those of Thoreau and Margaret Fuller.
- Fulford, Amanda. "Ventriloquising the Voice: Writing in the University." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 43, No. 2 (May 2009): 223-237.
- Howe, Eric M. "Henry David Thoreau, Forest Succession & the Nature of Science: A Method for Curriculum Development." *American Biology Teacher* 71, No. 7 (September 2009): 397-404.
- Keck, Michaela. "Thoreau's *Walden* and the American Dream: Challenge or Myth?" in *The American Dream*. Ed. Harold Bloom and Blake Hobby. New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2009. 235p. hardcover (ISBN 079109801X), \$45.00. Pp. 213-233. For readers 9-12.
- Lewis, Nathaniel. "Reading the Maine Woods: Thoreau's Pointless Maine Narratives." In *Maine's Place in the Environmental Imagination*. Ed. Michael D. Burke. Newcastle Upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars, 2008. 130p. hardcover (ISBN 184718572X), £24.99. Pp. 69-87.
- Line, Les. "In Living Color." *Audubon* 111, No. 5 (October 2009): 74-80. On Thoreau's lecture "Autumnal Tints."
- Little, Matthew. "An Approach to Thoreau's 'Economy' with Students 'Who Are Said to Be in Moderate Circumstances' (or Plan to Be So)." *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 9, No. 3 (Fall 2009): 555-561.
- Lysaker, John T. and William Rossi, eds. *Emerson and Thoreau: Figures of Friendship*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2009. 222p. hardcover (ISBN 0253221439), \$60.00.
- McKibben, Bill, ed. *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau*. Reviewed by Jackson Lears in *New Republic* 240, No. 18 (October 7, 2009): 34-43.
- McTier, Rosemary Scanlon. "'An Insect View of Its Plain': Nature and Insects in Thoreau, Dickinson, and Muir." 2009. Duquesne University. PhD dissertation. 274p. "The simultaneous emergence of ecocriticism and cultural entomology has created a critical need for a discussion of the appearance and function of insects as they appear in literature."
- "Major Milestone Reached in the Harding Collection." *Notes from Walden Woods* (2009): 1, 3. On completion of a finding aid at the Henley Library for the Walter Harding Collection of the Thoreau Society.
- Malachuk, Daniel S. "'A Still More Perfect and Glorious State': Thoreau's Maine." In *Maine's Place in the Environmental Imagination*. Ed. Michael D. Burke. Newcastle Upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars, 2008. 130p. hardcover (ISBN 184718572X), £24.99. Pp. 43-67.
- Miniotaite, Grazina. "Justice Against Legality: Theory of Civil Disobedience and Liberal Political Thought (Part I)." *Logos: Thoreau Society Bulletin*, Number 269, Winter 2010
- Religijos, Filosofijos, Komparatyvistikos ir meno Žurnalas* [A Journal of Religion, Philosophy, Comparative Cultural Studies, and Art] 57 (2009): 67-74; Part 2 in 58 (2009): 54-62. In Lithuanian.
- "Mt. Greylock." *Backpacker* (November 2009): 26.
- Owyong, Yuet See Monica. "Clothing Semiotics and the Social Construction of Power Relations." *Social Semiotics* 19, No. 2 (June 2009): 191-211. An exploration of Thoreau's question about "how far men would retain their relative rank if they were divested of their clothes."
- Pipkin, John. *Woodsburner: A Novel*. New York: Nan A. Talese, 2009. 365p. hardcover (ISBN 0385528655), \$24.95. Reviewed by Sarah Chapin in *Thoreau Society Bulletin* No. 268 (Fall 2009): 10-12.
- Robinson, David M. "Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and Transcendentalism," in *American Literary Scholarship: An Annual 2007*. Ed. Gary Scharnhorst. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009. Pp. 3-34. The annual survey of work on Thoreau and his contemporaries.
- Sanders, Scott Russell. "Simplicity and Sanity." *Georgia Review* 63, No. 1 (Spring 2009): 13-29.
- Slayton, Tom. *Searching For Thoreau: On the Trails and Shores of Wild New England*. Reviewed by Ted Vogt in *Long Trail News* 68, No. 2 (Summer 2008): 24. "Slayton, like Thoreau, is a fine descriptive writer, whether evoking the bulk and expanse of Kathadin or observing wildflowers and bird songs."
- Stout, Nancy. "What Would Thoreau Think? A Representative List of Green Periodicals for the 21st Century." *Serials Librarian* 57, No. 3 (October 2009): 233-243.
- Sullivan, Robert. *The Thoreau You Don't Know: What the Prophet of Environmentalism Really Meant*. Reviewed by Constance Manoli-Skocay in *Thoreau Society Bulletin* No. 268 (Fall 2009): 9-10; by Susan Cosier in *Audubon* 111, No. 6 (November-December 2009): 108; by Elizabeth Kolbert in *New Yorker* 85, No. 26 (August 31, 2009): 70-74; by David Gessner in *New York Times Book Review* (April 19, 2009): 26.
- Thoreau, Henry D. *The Journal of Henry David Thoreau 1837-1861*. Ed. Damion Searls. New York: New York Review, 2009. 704p. papercover (ISBN 159017321X), \$22.95. Reviewed by Donna Seaman in *Booklist* (November 15, 2009): p. 8. Selections from Thoreau's *Journal*.
- . *Journal Volume 7: 1853-1854*. Ed. Nancy Craig Simmons and Ron Thomas. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009. 531p. hardcover (ISBN 0691065403), \$65.00.
- . *The Maine Woods: A Fully Annotated Edition*. Ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer. New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 2009. 384p. hardcover (ISBN 0300122837), \$35.00.
- . *Walden, "Civil Disobedience" and Other Writings*. 3d ed. Ed. William John Rossi. Reviewed by Henrik Otterberg in *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 36, No. 2 (Fall 2009): 271-282. A review-essay.
- . *Walden oder Leben in den Wäldern*. Trans. Anneliese Dangel. Köln: Anaconda, 2009. 304p. hardcover (ISBN386647377X), €6.95.
- Vold, Veronica Ellen. "Dwelling in Ecological Poetry: Emily Dickinson's Nature Poems and Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*." 2009. University of Montana—Missoula. PhD dissertation. "Dickinson and Thoreau demonstrate an ecopoetics that accords with an ecofeminist phenomenology,

a critical praxis that resists logics of domination and recognizes the interdependency and reciprocity between individuals and their ecological communities.”

Wheeler, Joseph C. “The Thoreau Birth House Restored!”
Thoreau Society Bulletin No. 268 (Fall 2009): 6.



We are indebted to Richard Winslow III for information used in this Bulletin. Please keep your editor informed of items not yet added and new items as they appear.

Notes & Queries

Leslie Perrin Wilson

My thanks to all who contributed to *TSB* 269, in particular to those who wrote essays for this issue. **John Hessler** is Senior Cartographic Librarian in the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. **Jan Hokeš** is an English teacher and a translator of Thoreau’s work into Czech. **Jack Doyle** is a high-school senior at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Texas A&M University, **Amy E. Earhart** specializes in nineteenth-century American literature and culture and in digital humanities. **Richard J. Schneider** is Professor Emeritus in English at Wartburg College, author and editor of numerous books and essays on Thoreau, and former editor of the *Concord Saunterer*.

Thanks also to stalwart proofreaders **Dave Bonney**, **Ron Hoag**, and **Bob Hudspeth**.

Michael Berger informs us that in a review of books about going-green experiments (*New Yorker*, August 31, 2009), Elizabeth Kolbert refers to Thoreau’s Walden “experiment” (or “stunt”). **Clarence Burley** sends word that in Robert Lanza’s *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe* (with Bob Berman; published 2009), Emerson and Thoreau are repeatedly cited in explaining (via quantum physics) that matter, space, and time are constructs of consciousness, without objective reality. Clarence also notes the use of Thoreau in the Zippy the Pinhead comic strip for April 27, 2008, online at http://zippythepinhead.com/Merchant2/merchant.mv?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=ZTP&Product_Code=27-Apr-08&Category_Code.

Following up on an earlier communication, **Matthew Edney** forwarded an electronic copy of the chapter on Thoreau, cartography, and *The Maine Woods* in Kent Ryden’s *Landscape with Figures* (2001). **Bob Clarke** notes that Douglas Brinkley’s *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* includes—among its 800-plus pages—a few mentions of Thoreau. **Bob Hudspeth** has found recent evidence of Thoreau as inspiration for poetry (Anne Shaw’s “Thoreau Dying,” in the Fall 2009 issue of the *Beloit Poetry Journal*; William Heyen’s “Heaven” in the July/August 2009 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*) and for music (*Facets 3*, a CD issued in 2009 by Crystal Records, featuring John Holt playing the trumpet and including “Four Thoreau Songs,” based on texts by HDT).

As part of a sabbatical research project in 2010, **John Kitterman** is looking for information about people who have

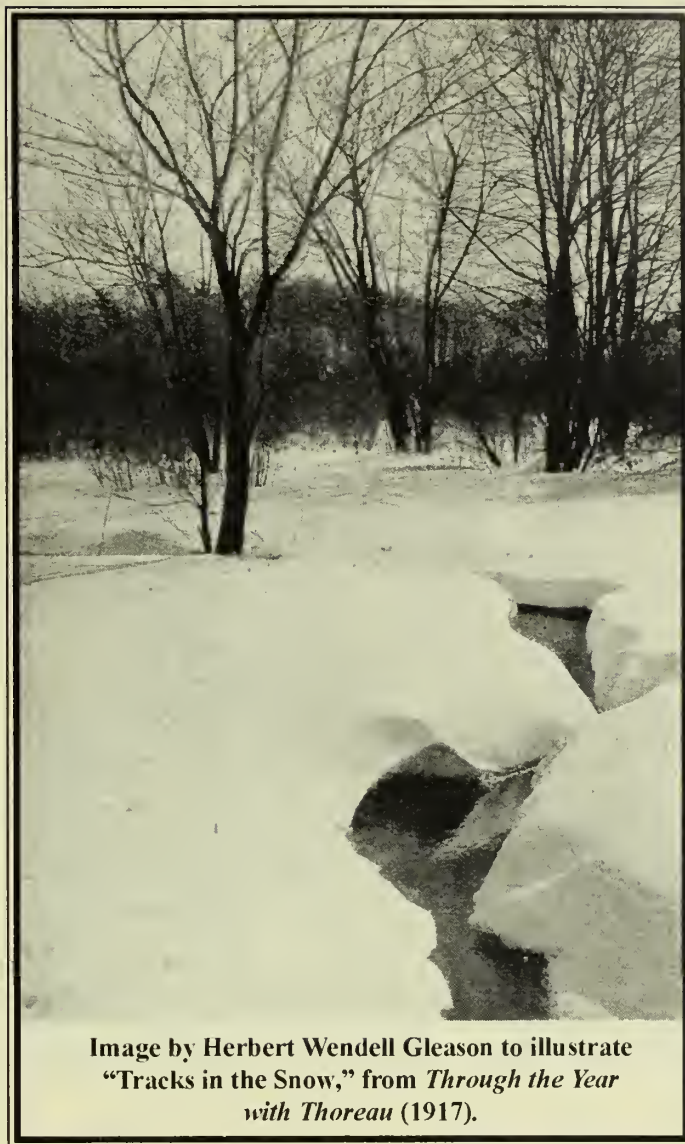


Image by Herbert Wendell Gleason to illustrate
 “Tracks in the Snow,” from *Through the Year*
 with Thoreau (1917).

imitated Thoreau’s experience by building a replica of his cabin at Walden Pond. They may or may not have lived in it; it may have been for educational or recreational purposes. John plans to interview these people, preferably in person, and include them in a book, along with photos of their cabins. Please send any information to jkitterman@ferrum.edu or call (540) 365-4326. (John lives in Virginia and teaches at Ferrum College.)

Your editor received an opinion piece from **Paul Carr** on the demise of the autonomous individual, inspired by the 2009 Annual Gathering. **Elise Lemire**, whose *Black Walden* was published in 2009 by the University of Pennsylvania Press, recently sent word about an article she wrote (“Walden Woods Was a Black Space Before It Was a Green Space”) for *History News Network*, accessible at <http://hnn.us/articles/116046.html>.

Sandy Petrulionis has reported a couple of “Thoreau sightings” in the magazine *Alaska* for November 2009, in a photograph accompanying a profile of naturalist Richard Nelson, and an article by Sherry Simpson titled “Going Thoreau.” **Richard Winslow III**, too, sent information about Simpson’s piece, in which Thoreau figures in the description of a three-day stay in a cabin at Eagle River Nature Center. Richard also came across Tess Taylor’s poem “Reading Walden



Image by Herbert Wendell Gleason to illustrate
"Architecture in the Snow," from *Through the Year
with Thoreau* (1917).

in the Air" in the *Southwest Review* (Volume 94, Number 3). Glenn Mott, who has a seasonal retreat in Milo, Maine, passes along (via brother Wes Mott) a reference to an article in the October 22, 2009, issue of the magazine *Northern Woodlands*. Dave Mance III's "Return of the Moose" (accessible online at http://northernwoodlands.org/editors_blog/article/return-of-the-moose/), includes the Maxham daguerreotype of Thoreau and suggests that the moose's beard "would have made Henry David Thoreau envious."

Jym St. Pierre sent word of the Dexter Historical Society's traveling exhibition "Maine's Woods: Observations by Bert Lincoln Call & Henry David Thoreau," which was displayed at the University of Southern Maine Area Gallery, Woodbury Campus Center, Portland, from November 5 through December 11, 2009. Consisting of photographs by Call accompanied by passages from Thoreau's *The Maine Woods*, the exhibition opened in May 2009 at the Abbott Museum in Dexter, Maine, and will travel in Maine and New England for the next five years. More information is available on the Web at <http://www.callthoreauexhibit.com/>.

Last fall, Ed Schofield took part in the joint Thoreau

Society/Massachusetts Historical Society/American Antiquarian Society reenactment of Thoreau's public statements on behalf of John Brown, in Concord, Boston, and Worcester. On Tuesday, November 3, 2009, Ed offered a brief overview of Worcester in the nineteenth century in conjunction with a one-person dramatic presentation by Kevin Radaker. Recently, Ed lamented the fact that as of September 1, 2009, there is for the first time no photographic business in the Worcester building that formerly housed the studio of Benjamin Maxham, one of three unique versions of whose 1856 daguerreotype of Thoreau the Thoreau Society owns.

Rick Thompson writes that Lauren Weber's 2009 book *In Cheap We Trust: The Story of a Misunderstood American Virtue* has several references to Thoreau. An appendix, "Talk Is Cheap: A Primer on Frugal Living," includes the following: "The young philosopher wasn't above boasting about his thrifty chops; the budget for his DIY shack came to only \$28.13, or \$641.75 in today's dollars. The book didn't get much traction when it was published in 1854, but it went on to inspire untold numbers of people searching for an 'authentic' life of inner riches and outer simplicity."

Finally, from the Concord Free Public Library, Conni Manoli-Skocay is happy to announce the completion of the second and final phase of the "Thoreau Books Project," which was supported by local and state Community Preservation funding. See Conni's article in the Winter 2009 issue of the *Bulletin* for a full description of this initiative to preserve the CFPL's rich and important holdings of volumes from Thoreau's own library.

President's Column

Tom Potter

I write these words as world leaders meet in Copenhagen to seek agreement about what direction to pursue regarding global warming. I am not a scientist, so I cannot argue with proposed methods of extracting data concerning the rate of warming or its effect on the future of world climate. But I am a naturalist, and based on what I read and hear I am inclined to accept the evidence of climate change as laid before us. I think of Thoreau's comment in his journal entry for November 11, 1850, "Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in the milk."

I have no economic interests beyond those of an average consumer who will be affected by the decisions of those leaders and scientists. However, I do care about how their decisions will affect my health and that of other citizens of the world—all members of the animal and plant kingdoms.

Innocently or not, as a dominant species humans have had a profound impact on this planet, our home. Our influence is demonstrated in the extinction or threatened extinction of many of the animals and plants that at one time were part of our environment. Consider the Dodo bird and the Labrador duck, the Carolina parakeet, the rapidly-disappearing black rhinoceros, and the polar bear. Thoreau cared deeply about this world around him. He was often outspoken regarding the enterprises of his neighbors. His critical stance is clear in a letter he wrote on May 20, 1860, to H. G. O. Blake: "What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?"

Thoreau was aware of and concerned about human impact on the environment. Regarding the gulf between nature and short-

[130]

THE TRACKS OF A FOX

PERHAPS of all our untamed quadrupeds, the fox¹ has obtained the widest and most familiar reputation, from the time of Pilpay and Aesop to the present day. His recent tracks still give variety to a winter's walk. I tread in the steps of the fox that has gone before me by some hours, or which perhaps I have started, with such a tiptoe of expectation as if I were on the trail of the Spirit itself which resides in the wood, and expected soon to catch it in its lair. I am curious to know what has determined its graceful curvatures, and how surely they were coincident with the fluctuations of some mind. I know which way a mind wended, what horizon it faced, by the setting of these tracks, and whether it moved slowly or rapidly, by their greater or less intervals and distinctness; for the swiftest step leaves yet a lasting trace. Sometimes you will see the trails of many together, and where they have gamboled and gone through a hundred evolutions, which testify to a singular listlessness and leisure in nature.

When I see a fox run across the pond on the snow, with the carelessness of freedom, or at intervals trace his course in the sunshine along the ridge of a hill, I give up to him sun and earth as to their true proprie-

¹ In spite of numerous fox-hunters, with their packs of trained hounds, Reynard manages to survive in Concord, and it is still true — though to a less degree than in Thoreau's day — that "his recent tracks give variety to a winter's walk." H. W. G.



From *Through the Year with Thoreau* (1917).

term economic considerations, he wrote in "Life Without Principle," "If a man walk in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen." Disgusted, Thoreau concluded, "As if a town had no interest in its forests but to cut them down!"

If we Thoreauvians cannot hear Henry's call to rethink our relationship with nature, then we have missed the major point of his life, his Transcendental embrace of the world around him. I cannot say with any degree of confidence that Thoreau in his day could have envisioned the current global warming issue. But I think that if he were here today, he would again write, lecture, and perhaps even spend a night in jail in protest against what we are doing to this fragile planet.

Thoreau was concerned about the air and the sky and their future. He demonstrated his respect for nature in his journal entry for January 3, 1861, when he wrote, "But most men, it seems to me, do not care for Nature and would sell their share in all her beauty, as long as they may live, for a stated sum—many for a glass of rum. Thank God, men cannot as yet fly, and lay waste the sky as well as the earth!" Well, Henry, given time, we have in fact laid waste to the sky as well as the forest, the Dodo, and the Labrador duck.

On April 10, 1853, Thoreau wrote Blake a letter containing a thought that aptly concludes my comments: "Though it is late to leave off this wrong way, it will seem early the moment we begin in the right way; instead of mid-afternoon, it will be early morning with us. We have not got half way to dawn yet."

**Please submit items for the Spring Bulletin
to your editor before March 1**
Leslie Perrin Wilson; lwilson@minlib.net

Notes from Concord

Mike Frederick

You are invited to participate in two upcoming events, a program in January in celebration of Martin Luther King Day and the Thoreau Society fundraising auction in February.

Martin Luther King Day

In 1849, Henry Thoreau published his famous "Resistance to Civil Government," otherwise known as "Civil Disobedience," an essay that influenced the Dutch resistance during WWII, Indian independence, and the American civil rights movement. More than a protest essay, "Resistance to Civil Government" champions the moral autonomy of the individual and the power of a single individual to effect change. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote: "During my early college days, I read Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience for the first time. Fascinated by the idea of refusing to cooperate with an evil system, I was so deeply moved that I re-read the work several times."

Join local historians and Walden Pond park staff for this sixteenth annual program to commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. Thoreau scholar Thomas Blanding will lead an engaging discussion regarding the history of the essay, from its early delivery as a lecture, to its composition, publication, and legacy. Learn how King was inspired by Thoreau's essay. After the program, you are invited to the Thoreau house replica to meet Henry Thoreau, as portrayed by Richard Smith.

This program was coordinated by Michael Mitchell of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in cooperation with Thomas Blanding and the Friends of Walden Pond (an activity of the Thoreau Society). The program takes place at the Tsongas Gallery at the Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond, located at the Walden Pond State Reservation. The public program is free of charge, but there is a daily \$5 parking fee per vehicle. For more information call (978) 369-3254.

Thoreau Society Fundraiser

February marks the Thoreau Society's sixth annual fund raising event. Last year's Arlo Guthrie concert was moderately successful, raising \$8,000 for the Society after expenses. But this year we return to our online auction as a way to profile the talents of our members, as well as to raise proceeds for our organization's mission and activities. Since 2004, we have raised over \$25,000 through our online auctions. We hope you'll consider joining us in making this year's event the most successful one ever.

Please consider donating an item to our auction at <http://thoreausociety.cmarket.com/auction>. Perhaps you could offer a special service or product around your area of expertise, as a way to profile your work, organization, college, university, or company. For example, you might offer a signed copy of your book, audio, or video project. You could offer a walk, talk, or lecture. Perhaps you would like to profile your organization with a personal tour of your facilities. In addition to these suggestions, people have donated the following in previous Thoreau Society auctions: antiques, artwork, dinners, gift certificates (to florists, restaurants, and shops), getaways, hikes, jewelry, lunches, sporting memorabilia, and event tickets. You may also consider sponsoring the auction, which will allow placement of your logo and a link to your site on our auction pages. Sponsorships help to underwrite the costs of holding the auction.

You can donate an item now through mid-February, even after the auction has begun. If every Thoreau Society member participates by either donating an item or by bidding, then we can easily have our most successful auction ever. If you need to "Simplify, simplify," then look around for something you can offer to the auction, and "Donate, donate."

For more information, visit www.thoreausociety.org, email: mike.frederick@thoreausociety.org, or phone: 978-369-5319 to speak with me.

The *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, published quarterly by the Thoreau Society, is indexed in *American Humanities Index* and *MLA International Bibliography*.

Editor: Leslie Perrin Wilson.

Formatting Editor: Robert C. Hall.

Editorial Advisory Committee: Dave Bonney, Ronald A. Bosco, James Dawson, Jayne Gordon, Ronald Wesley Hoag, W. Barksdale Maynard, Wesley T. Mott, Sandra Petrulionis, Richard Schneider, Edmund A. Schofield.

Board of Directors: J. Walter Brain; Robert Clarke; David B. Ganoe; Robert D. Habich, Secretary; Lorna Mack; Gayle Moore; Wesley T. Mott; Christine O'Connor; Paula Peinovich; Charles T. Phillips; Tom Potter, President; Michael Schleifer, Treasurer; Dale Schwie; Kevin Van Anglen; Joseph Wheeler.

Staff: Michael Frederick, Executive Director; Margaret Gram, Accountant; John Chateaufort, Education Outreach Coordinator; John Fadiman, Don Bogart and Richard Smith, Shop Associates.

Established in 1941, the **Thoreau Society, Inc.**, is an international nonprofit organization with a mission to stimulate interest in and foster education about Thoreau's life, works, legacy, and his place in his world and in ours, challenging all to live a deliberate, considered life. The Thoreau Society has the following organizational goals:

- To encourage research on Thoreau's life and works and to act as a repository for Thoreau-related materials
- To educate the public about Thoreau's ideas and their application to contemporary life
- To preserve Thoreau's legacy and advocate for the preservation of Thoreau country

Membership in the Society includes subscriptions to its two publications, the *Thoreau Society Bulletin* (published quarterly) and *The Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies* (published annually). Society members receive a 10% discount on all merchandise purchased from the Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond and advance notice about Society programs, including the Annual Gathering.

Membership: Thoreau Society, 341 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742, U.S.A.; tel: (978) 369-5310; fax: (978) 369-5382; e-mail: info@thoreausociety.org.

Merchandise (including books and mail-order items): Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond, 915 Walden Street, Concord, MA 01742-4511, U.S.A.; tel: (978) 287-5477; fax: (978) 287-5620; e-mail: info@shopatwaldenpond.org; Web: www.shopatwaldenpond.org.

Concord Saunterer: A Journal of Thoreau Studies: Laura Dassow Walls, Department of English, 519 Humanities Office Bldg., University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, U.S.A.; tel: (803) 777-2308; e-mail: wallsld@mailbox.sc.edu.

Thoreau Society Bulletin: Leslie Perrin Wilson, Concord Free Public Library, 129 Main Street, Concord, MA 01742, U.S.A.; tel: (978) 318-3342; fax (978) 318-3344; e-mail: lwilson@minlib.net.

All other communications: Thoreau Society, 341 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742, U.S.A.; tel: (978) 369-5310; fax: (978) 369-5382; e-mail: info@thoreausociety.org.

www.thoreausociety.org

Visit the Thoreau Society on Facebook and Twitter

©2010 The Thoreau Society, Inc.



Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper